

League of Women Voters Nonpartisan Voters Guide Guide to General Election—November 3, 2009

Judge of the Court of Common Pleas

(Vote for Not More Than Five)

Term: 10 years

Salary: \$161,850

Duties: The Court of Common Pleas is primarily a trial court. There are four divisions of the Court of Common Pleas: Civil, Criminal, Orphans', and Family. The judges can be assigned from one division to another as needed. Judges can run on both the Republican and Democratic tickets.

Question: By what factors should a voter decide whether or not a judge should be elected to office?

Democratic

Joe Williams, 57, Verona/Penn Hills email: jkw3law@aol.com

Campaign Website: www.judgejoewilliams.com

Education: B.A. Carnegie Mellon 1974, M.S. University of Pittsburgh 1981, J.D. Duquesne University School of Law 1985

Occupation: Judge

Qualifications: Trial attorney for 24 years. Worked as a Clinical Psychologist for 7 years. Named one of the "Best Attorney's" in America. "Highly Recommended" by the Allegheny County Bar Association.

Answer: There is a system of review for a sitting judge, thereby, allowing the public to file complaints and have their merits reviewed by members of the Bar. The issue is whether the review is objective and assure the public's trust. Fundamentally I believe the system works, clearly the quality and integrity of the process are critical to the public's trust.

Susan Evashavik DiLucente,

No Reply

Don Walko, 56, Pittsburgh, North Side email: vote.walko@comcast.net

Education: B.S., Penn State University, 1975; J.D. Dickinson School of Law, 1978

Occupation: Attorney, Representative in the General Assembly

Qualifications: Attorney, 31 years; Representative in the Pennsylvania General Assembly, 15 years; Chairman, Judiciary Subcommittee on Courts.

Answer: The Judicial Conduct Board fails to meet the public's need because most people are unaware of it and its' operations are not transparent. As people enter the judicial system, either at the Magisterial Judge level or at the Supreme Court level, they need to be made aware of their rights to pursue complaints. Moreover, that process must be made to be more transparent.

Phil Ignelzi, 53, McCandless email: pignelzi@ocmilaw.com Campaign
Website: www.phil4judge.com

Education: University of Dayton B.S. Accounting 1978 Magna Cum Laude; University of Pittsburgh School of Law J.D. 1981 Cum Laude

Occupation: Partner – Ogg, Cordes, Murphy, Ignelzi, LLP

Qualifications: Trial Lawyer – 27 years of experience. Tried in excess of 100 jury trials to verdict. Member Academy of Trial Lawyers. "Highly Recommended" from the Allegheny County Bar Association Judiciary Committee. Recognized as Pennsylvania Super Lawyer by Philadelphia Magazine and Law and Politics. In 2008, one of the top 50 lawyers in Pittsburgh. Included in Best lawyers in America last 10 years: Personal Injury/Civil Litigation

and White Collar Criminal Defense. Highest Martindale-Hubbell rating for knowledge of substantive law and ethical behavior.

Answer: I have very limited experience dealing with the Judicial Conduct Board. However, regarding the limited involvement I have had, coupled with cases that have received publicity, it appears the Board is appropriately carrying out its duties.

Arnie Klein, 48, Mt. Lebanon email:kleinforjudge@gmail.com

Campaign Website:www.kleinforjudge.com

Education: B.S., University of Pittsburgh, 1983; J.D., University of Pittsburgh, School of Law, 1986

Occupation: Trial Attorney, Bacharach and Klein, 22 years

Qualifications: Trial Attorney 22 years, Elder Law Committee, 12 years, AARP Panel Attorney, 4 years, Assistant Allegheny County Public Defender, Trial Division, 2 years, Court-appointed on Criminal and Orphans Court cases.

Answer: I believe the existing process is fair. It provides a mechanism for citizen complaints to be made and reviewed. It also provides a mechanism for meritorious complaints to be heard and appropriate actions to be taken. However, if I become aware of deficiencies in the judicial discipline system, I will support corrective reform.

Republican

Michele Zappala Peck,

No Reply

Alex Bicket, 53, Mt. Lebanon email:bicket@zklaw.com

Campaign website:www.bicket4judge.com

Education: B.A., University of Stellenbosch, Cape Town, South Africa - 1978; M.A. Columbia University, New York 1982; J.D. Duquesne University 1988

Occupation: Attorney

Qualifications: Trial attorney for past 21 years (1988 – Present) High School for 7 years (1982-1989)

Answer: Generally speaking, the system works. However, the public should also be made aware of what they can and should expect from sitting judges before whom they appear. Consequently, I believe that the Judicial Conduct Board and its work should have greater visibility so that the public is aware of why, how and where judicial grievances can be logged and, most importantly, what the results are of the grievances filed.

Susan Evashavik DiLucente

See above

Phil Ignelzi

See above

Arnie Klein

See above